



20 MAR 2019  
FM: CHDIRAUX  
TO: ALAUX  
ALAUX 004/19

SUBJ: USS TAMPA PURPLE HEART CAMPAIGN

1. The U.S. Coast Guard needs help locating and contacting descendants of the USS TAMPA, which was tragically sunk during World War I with all hands lost. Last year marked the 100th Anniversary of the loss of the USS TAMPA and her Coast Guard crew. The Service has yet to present 84 of the outstanding Purple Heart Medals awarded posthumously to the crew, and it needs to bring closure through this important effort.

2. There is an immediate goal of recognizing as many of the descendants as possible by this Memorial Day. The Coast Guard is requesting the Auxiliary's assistance to do this. All Auxiliarists are encouraged to read ALCOAST 062/19 below which provides background, and also check out the list of USS TAMPA crewmembers whose descendants have yet to be identified for receipt of the Purple Heart Medal at <https://www.history.uscg.mil/tampa>.

3. If you are aware of a descendant of any of these USS TAMPA crewmembers, please contact as soon as possible:

Ms. Nora L. Chidlow, Archivist, United States Coast Guard Historian's Office  
(202) 559-5142  
Nora.L.Chidlow@uscg.mil

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FM COMDT COGARD WASHINGTON DC//CG-092//  
TO ALCOAST  
UNCLAS //N05700//  
ALCOAST 062/19  
COMDTNOTE 5700  
SUBJ: USS TAMPA PURPLE HEART MEDAL CAMPAIGN

1. The U.S. Coast Guard needs your help with locating and contacting descendants of the USS TAMPA, which was tragically sunk during World War I with all hands lost. The Service has yet to present 84 of the outstanding Purple Heart Medals awarded posthumously to the crew. We intend to recognize as many of the descendants as possible this Memorial Day. We need your help to do this.

2. Background:

A. USS TAMPA, a Coast Guard ship and crew serving under the Department of the Navy, was lost with all hands after being torpedoed by a German U-boat off Wales on 26 September 1918. This tragic loss occurred just weeks before the end of World War I. It was the single largest loss suffered by the Coast Guard during that conflict.

B. At the time of TAMPA's loss, the Purple Heart Medal was not in use. In 1942, eligibility was extended to include the Coast Guard, but it was not until 1952 that the awarding of the Purple Heart Medal was made retroactive for actions after 5 April 1917. However, TAMPA was overlooked until 1999, when a retired Coast Guardsman submitted a proposal to award the Purple Heart to her crew.

C. In 1999, then-Commandant Admiral James Loy authorized the posthumous awarding of the Purple Heart Medal to the crew of USS TAMPA. Today, over one hundred years after TAMPA was lost and twenty years after the first TAMPA Purple Heart was awarded, the Coast Guard is still attempting to identify those families who have yet to receive their ancestors' Purple Heart.

3. The purpose of this ALCOAST is to raise awareness of the Purple Heart award program and to continue to identify those families who have yet to receive their ancestors' medals. You can help.

4. Summary of USS TAMPA Purple Heart Medals awarded:

A. There were 130 men on TAMPA, including 111 Coast Guardsmen and 4 Navy men.

B. 26 TAMPA Purple Heart Medals have been claimed since 1999.

C. 3 TAMPA Purple Heart Medals are presently in progress.

D. 84 TAMPA Purple Heart Medals remain unclaimed.

5. The names of the 84 TAMPA crew whose Purple Heart Medals remain unclaimed are listed here: <https://www.history.uscg.mil/tampa/>.

6. To submit applications for TAMPA Purple Heart Medals, please contact Ms. Nora Chidlow, Coast Guard Archivist, at [Nora.L.Chidlow@uscg.mil](mailto:Nora.L.Chidlow@uscg.mil) or 202-559-5142. She has served as the primary point of contact between the Coast Guard and many TAMPA descendants, and also with the Medals & Awards branch.

7. To apply for their ancestor's Purple Heart Medal, descendants are required to provide documentation showing the descendant's relationship to the TAMPA crew member, such as family trees, pages from family Bibles, birth/death certificates,

and/or pages from Ancestry or other genealogical applications. Please expect about 4-6 weeks' time for processing.

8. I encourage all members of our Coast Guard family to share this ALCOAST with the widest possible audience. We owe it to our shipmates in USS TAMPA and their descendants to ensure their heroism and sacrifice are recognized and remembered.

9. RDML Melissa Bert, Director of Governmental and Public Affairs, sends.

10. Internet release is authorized.